

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The Senator from Texas.

Mrs. HUTCHISON. Parliamentary inquiry: I did not understand the last unanimous consent request, that we were going to a nomination?

Mr. JOHNSON. Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mrs. HUTCHISON. I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mrs. HUTCHISON. Mr. President, I believe we are now on the glidepath to finishing the Military Construction and Veterans Affairs bill. We have an order. If we can clear some of the further amendments that are listed for a vote, I know we will be able to do that. Some of these are being negotiated at this time. At least we have a way forward.

Our staffs have worked very diligently on this since we started this bill last Tuesday and, for various reasons, we are going to finish it tomorrow, a week later. We could not have done it without a lot of cooperation. I thank my distinguished colleague, the chairman of the subcommittee, Senator JOHNSON, and his staff: Christina Evans, Chad Schulken, and Andy Vanlandingham. My staff also has ably worked through these. When I was called away to Fort Hood, my chief clerk, Dennis Balkham, did a great job with the help of Ben Hammond in our office. I appreciate very much all the cooperation and the help we have had coming to this point.

I am pleased with our bill. I think we have a good bill that will do what all of us want, which is to assure that our veterans have the health care, the benefits, the needed outreach they should have for getting their benefits on a timely basis. This is one of the priorities we are funding in this bill. Secondly, of course, the military construction part of this bill is going to assure many quality-of-life improvements for our military personnel. Also, we will be building in faraway places where our troops are being housed right now. We want to give them every comfort we possibly can as they are fighting for our freedom.

I thank my colleagues and certainly appreciate that we are now moving toward final passage of this bill tomorrow. I appreciate all the cooperation we have had.

I yield the floor and suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. DURBIN. I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

EL SALVADOR'S CHALLENGES

Mr. FEINGOLD. Mr. President, on November 16, 1989, six Jesuit Fathers, their housekeeper, and her daughter were brutally murdered by members of the Salvadoran Army. The Senate has passed a resolution remembering and honoring the lives and work of these individuals, and today, as we solemnly mark the 20th anniversary of this tragedy, I am struck by the enduring legacy of those who lived and taught their commitment to justice, human rights, and peace in the face of violence and oppression.

A New York Times article published on November 17, 1989, a day after their murders, remembered Father Ignacio Ellacuria Bescoetxea as a strong advocate for human rights and a key participant in successful negotiations for the release of the President's daughter in 1985. Father Ignacio Martín-Baró was "a gentle academic type, with an office overflowing with books, papers, everything," and the editor of a widely distributed scholarly journal. Father Segundo Montes worked to collect data on atrocities committed in El Salvador's war so that, some day, justice could be done and victims would not be forgotten. Father Amando López was a committed professor of theology and served the seminary as its rector. Father Juan Ramon Moreno was the assistant director of the university's chapel which also served as an auditorium for lectures making relevant church teachings to the situation in El Salvador. Father Joaquin López y López was the director in El Salvador of Fe y Alegría which organized primary schools for children in the poorest neighborhoods.

These men put their faith and academic expertise in philosophy, political science, sociology, economics, and theology to good use. They maintained a distinct hope for an El Salvador at peace, and a country that respected and protected the rights and well-being of all its people—including the very poorest. These teachers were invaluable educators not only for their students and fellow Salvadorans, but also for the global community, bringing international attention and awareness to the plight of those most deeply affected by the conflict in their country. Though tragic, their deaths, and those of their housekeeper, Julia Elba Ramos, and her daughter, Celina Mariset Ramos, helped bring about the negotiations that ultimately led to peace in 1992, and their work on human rights and social justice is continued today by many in El Salvador and around the world, including the 28 Jesuit colleges and universities in the U.S.

The civil war is long over, and we witnessed a landmark for democracy this spring as El Salvador hosted its first transfer of power between political parties in a relatively peaceful and transparent election. The new government faces many challenges, including widespread poverty, crime, and gang violence, and the work of the six

priests remains just as important today—to address these great challenges, El Salvador must commit itself to the causes of education, justice, and human rights that they championed two decades ago.

NATIONAL ADOPTION MONTH

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I rise today to voice my support for National Adoption Month and the efforts of those individuals who play a role in foster care and the adoption process.

According to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, approximately 51,000 children are adopted in the United States of America each year. This is an encouraging figure and a strong testament to the efficacy of child welfare workers and foster care families around the country. However, this month also provides us with an opportunity to look at the more sobering side of this issue.

Currently, more than 130,000 children await adoption in the United States. This figure represents children who do not yet know the safety and security of loving parents or a home to call their own. This is a dilemma about which we must raise awareness and for which we must find solutions.

As a father myself, I can speak for the sacrifices that most parents willingly make for the well-being of their children. I therefore deeply admire and respect those who make these sacrifices for children who are not their own by birth by providing foster homes or by seeking to adopt.

Many adoptive parents have fought their way through significant obstacles in the legal process in order to adopt, and all have taken risks and made sacrifices in their own lives to create a family where none has been before.

The theme of this year's effort to raise awareness about the adoption of children and youth from foster care, "You don't have to be perfect to be a perfect parent," should help serve as a reminder that, although many would-be adoptive parents feel unequal to the job, they have a great deal to offer these children.

There are many ways to adopt, whether through the public foster care system, domestic adoption through private agencies within the United States, or intercountry adoption, to name a few, and numerous adoption agencies and workers stand ready to assist in the process.

As a Senator, I have seen the statistics of those children for whom no home was made, for whom no parent stepped up to the hard but rewarding job of parenting, and while there are encouraging exceptions, figures make it very clear that society has found no replacement for a stable home and loving parents.

Thus, it is both for the sake of these children and for the welfare of our Nation that I encourage adoption as a way to enhance one's own life and the society in which we all live. As I have